

BURUNDI



Operational highlights

- UNHCR assisted some 32,000 Burundian refugees (mainly from the “Old Settlements” in the United Republic of Tanzania) to return home. All returnees of 16 years and above were provided with national identity cards.
- All returnees received a cash grant, non-food items (NFIs), food rations for six months, seeds, tools, shelter kits, medical assistance, sanitary materials, scholastic items for children, and condoms. Vulnerable groups were provided with specialized transportation.
- UNHCR monitored return areas throughout the country and helped to resolve disputes linked to land and property recovery.
- Some 31,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly from the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), benefited from UNHCR’s protection and assistance.
- The Government of Burundi, through its national office for the protection of refugees and stateless people (ONPRA) significantly improved its processing of asylum claims.

Persons of concern

Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	DRC	24,600	24,600	52	59
	Various	350	350	52	53
Asylum-seekers	DRC	6,200	6,200	51	53
	Various	90	90	43	43
IDPs	Burundi	100,000	1,540	-	-
Returnees (refugees)*	Tanzania	29,100	29,100	52	55
	Rwanda	2,800	2,400	52	55
	Various	440	330	52	55
Total		163,580	64,610		

* Demographic breakdown of returnees refers to all returnees

- Some 200 refugees were resettled in third countries for medical, protection and family reunification reasons.

| Working environment |

The peace process continued in 2009 with the transformation of Palipehutu-FNL, the last rebel movement, into a political party. The integration of key leaders and ex-combatants of the FNL into the Government and the security forces occurred in line with the peace agreements, bringing to an end the mandate of the African Union peacekeeping mission in Burundi. Meanwhile, the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) continued its work in peace consolidation, good governance, national reconciliation, human rights and community recovery.

The economy continued to face a number of challenges. Inflation declined from 24.5 per cent in 2008 to 9 per cent in 2009, while economic growth declined from 4.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent. Increases in the price of petroleum affected the cost of essential commodities, resulting in food shortages in parts of the country. The year was marked by strikes in the public sector, notably by teachers, doctors and civil servants. Progress was made in terms of subregional integration with Burundi's admission into the East African Community (EAC). However, the vast majority of Burundians continued to live below the poverty level.

While some improvement was made in fostering good governance, Burundi placed at 168 in a corruption index where the most corrupt country ranked at 180, according to the 2009 report of Transparency International.

Some 8,500 ex-combatants of the FNL were demobilized and 3,500 of them were integrated into the national army. Peace efforts were complemented by the voluntary disarmament of the civilian population who, according to Government sources, turned in some 188,500 arms. Despite the gains made towards peace, clashes between the ruling and opposition parties continued.

Access to land continued to be the most difficult obstacle hampering the reintegration of returnees. The problem was most acute in the southern provinces, which received large numbers of refugees who fled the country in the 1970s. These returnees found themselves either landless or with their land occupied by others. A number of legal and administrative measures were instituted to address the situation. Notable among these was the formulation of a new policy on land distribution and ownership and the drafting of land legislation. In addition, the Government body mandated to resolve disputes related to land and other property was strengthened and decentralized.

| Achievements and impact |

• Main objectives

UNHCR planned to facilitate the voluntary repatriation to, and reintegration in Burundi of, some 55,000 refugees from neighbouring countries. It also aimed to support the establishment and smooth functioning of new Government bodies responsible for refugees and returnees. Furthermore, the Office sought to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers as well as provide material assistance and basic services to camp-based refugees.



Returnees from Tanzania's Old Settlements step on Burundian soil after 37 years of exile.

UNHCR / A. KIRCHHOFF

Protection and solutions

Key developments in the asylum regime were the adoption of an asylum law in 2008 and other legislation governing the establishment of the Consultative Commission for Foreigners and Refugees (*Commission Consultative pour Étrangers et Réfugiés*) and the Appeals Board (*Comité des Recours*).

UNHCR provided technical and financial support for the establishment of the State body responsible for asylum matters, l'*Office National pour la Protection des Réfugiés et des Apatrides* (ONPRA), which dealt with 2,600 asylum applications in 2009.

Though the newly created bodies strengthened the asylum regime in Burundi, the arrival of asylum-seekers from Rwanda tested ONPRA's ability to ensure that all asylum-seekers could avail themselves of the asylum process. Following reports that border authorities had turned some refugees away, ONPRA made concerted efforts to ensure that subsequent asylum-seekers were granted access to the refugee status determination (RSD) process.

Urban refugees who found it difficult to earn a living due to the harsh economic conditions in the country were assisted and transferred to camps, where they were assured of basic services. Necessary arrangements were initiated with ONPRA to issue identity cards to refugees above 14 years of age, as well as temporary stay permits and Convention Travel Documents to asylum-seekers and refugees in 2010.

Some 200 refugees were resettled. UNHCR assisted landless returnees with temporary shelter and worked to find solutions to land problems at the political and administrative levels.

Activities and assistance

REFUGEES

Community services: Sensitization campaigns raised the participation of women in refugee committees in the camps to 50 per cent in 2009. Given increasing levels of sexual and gender-based violence in the camps, standard procedures to combat it have been established. Vulnerable refugees in the camps and urban areas were identified to ensure they received special assistance.

Domestic needs and household support: Basic NFI's were distributed to camp-based refugees. Women and adolescent girls received sanitary items.

Education: Some 4,200, or 64 per cent, of children between 6 and 17 years were enrolled in schools. Of these, 46 per cent were girls. Nine classrooms were built (three in Musasa and six in Gasorwe).

At the primary level the enrolment rate for children of school-going age in the camps was 85 per cent; all were provided scholastic materials and uniforms. The teacher-student ratio stood at 1:45. At the secondary level the rate of enrolment was lower. This was due partly to the limited range of subjects taught at the secondary level as well as the lack of qualified Congolese teachers. Efforts

to increase the retention rate at the secondary level included the awarding of 100 scholarships to attend secondary schools in Bujumbura, as well as DAFI scholarships to attend Universities in Bujumbura, for those completing their secondary education with distinction.

Health and nutrition: All camp-based refugees had access to free health services. Cases detected through the regular epidemiological and nutritional survey requiring specialized treatment were referred to the relevant health institutions. Key health indicators in camps were within acceptable standards. More than 90 per cent of children received vaccination against measles. Refugees had access to voluntary HIV and AIDS testing centres as well as to anti-retroviral medication, though access in urban areas was more limited.

UNHCR covered half of the costs incurred by urban refugees for medical treatment at the national or private hospitals; in the case of vulnerable refugees, the Office covered all costs.

Income generation: Some 7,200 refugees benefitted from income generating activities, while some urban refugees received microfinance for income generation activities.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR supported its partners financially and helped train their staff.

Legal assistance: By the end of the year some 31,000 refugees asylum-seekers had been registered (using biometric data). Identity cards were issued to all adult refugees. Birth, marriage and death certificates were also issued through UNHCR's Government counterpart ONPRA. The latter's personnel received protection training, including in RSD. Congolese refugees resident in Gihinga camp (Mwaro province) were transferred to a new camp, Bwagiriza (Ruyigi province) for better protection and assistance.

Some urban refugees found it difficult to achieve self-sufficiency in the harsh economic climate. Those unable to sustain themselves and their families were given the option of moving to a camp. On average, 250 refugees were transferred from Bujumbura to the camps in Muyinga province each month. With continued arrivals from the DRC, there was an increase of 15 per cent in the number of refugees and asylum-seekers.

Sanitation: All refugees in the camp had access to communal latrines and bathrooms divided by gender, as in Gasorwe and Musasa camps, or individual latrines and bathrooms, as in Bwagiriza. An adequate number of garbage dumps was provided in the camps.

Shelter and other infrastructure: Some 950 houses were constructed in the Bwagiriza, Musasa and Gihinga camps. Another 520 houses in these camps were rehabilitated, and some 120 kitchens refurbished.

Water: During the reporting period, camp-based refugees received between 20 and 38 litres of water per day.

RETURNEES

Community services: Some 183 unaccompanied and separated children were repatriated from Tanzania, of whom 175 (96 per cent) were reunited with their families and the remaining placed with foster families. The unaccompanied and separated children were provided with basic material assistance in the form of food, shelter, health and scholastic materials, as well as with skills training. Specialized transportation was provided for vulnerable groups (including older people and those with disabilities), from the point of entry into Burundi to their final destinations, local communities, or to the transit centres for those without land.

Domestic needs and household support: Returnees received cash grants NFIs (including blankets, soap, sleeping mats, plastic sheeting, cooking utensils, mosquito nets and buckets), food rations for six months from WFP (one-month ration during transit and five-month rations at the final destination), seeds and tools, and sanitary materials.

Education: 57 returnee students, of whom 15 were females, benefited from DAFI scholarships for tertiary education in various disciplines. Scholastic materials from UNICEF were provided to children of school-going age.

Forestry: Each family benefiting from shelter materials was provided with 50 seedlings. Six nurseries were established in Karuzi and Muyinga provinces, with a total of 275,000 seedlings (247,500 tree and 27,500 fruit).

Health and nutrition: Returning refugees were screened and medical assistance was provided to those who needed it. Chronically ill returnees received free drugs and follow-up treatment. A total of 52 HIV and AIDS sensitization campaigns were organized for returnees. Some 210,000 condoms were distributed.

Income generation: 800 individuals (520 males and 280 females) benefited from training in the management of small-scale enterprises. Some 220 youth, including some 40 females, were trained in construction skills (masonry and carpentry). Five skills training centres were constructed in Kirundo, Muyinga and Karuzi provinces.

Legal assistance: Despite intense efforts by the Government and civil society organizations, only 50 per cent of all land-related conflicts were resolved. Since 2007, UNHCR's partners have received more than 7,600 reports of legal disputes, mostly involving returnees' land claims in the southern provinces around Makamba, of which more than 4,000 were settled amicably. Some 3,500 cases are yet to be resolved. Delayed resolution of such cases results in long stays at the transit centres by some returnees. All returnees were registered and the adults provided with individual identity cards. Returnee monitoring activities were conducted in the return areas.

Shelter and infrastructure: Shelter materials for some 23,000 small mud-brick houses and individual latrines were provided to returnees in their home communities. Additionally, three rural integrated villages, made up of a total of 670 housing units benefiting more than 3,000 returnees, were constructed. Up to 20 per cent of construction materials went to the vulnerable populations in home communities.

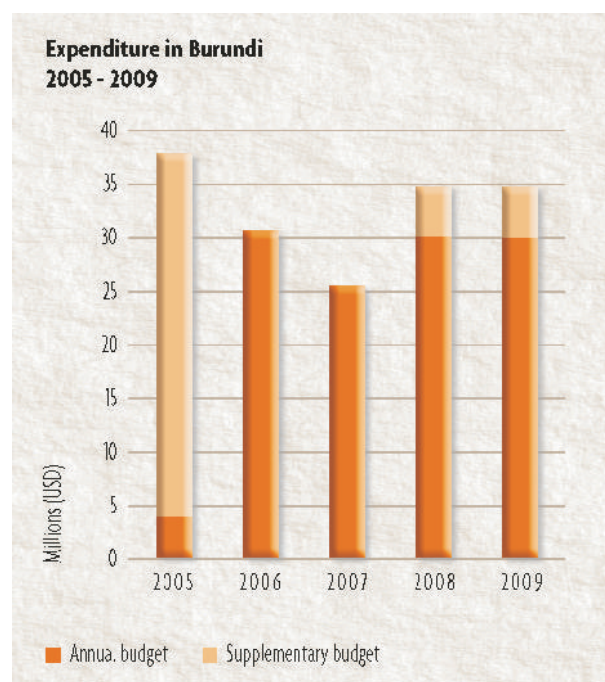
Transport and logistics: UNHCR provided transport for some 32,000 returnees and their belongings.

○ Constraints

The transfer of DRC refugees from Gihinga camp (Mwaro province) to the new Bwagiriza camp (Ruyigi province) for better protection and assistance purposes, posed a significant security challenge to the operation as the refugees resisted the relocation and threatened to walk back to the DRC. The Office worked with the Government to encourage the refugees to relocate to Bwagiriza after the Congolese officials had closed the border at Gatumba.

The harsh economic situation in the country compelled UNHCR to transfer urban refugees who could not make a living in Bujumbura to the camps at a rate of 250 refugees each month. A lack of resources prevented the implementation of assistance projects in the health, nutrition, education, and protection sectors. Administrative bottlenecks related to the allocation of sites for construction, seriously affected the provision of shelter to returnees.

The worsening security situation in the DRC prevented the repatriation of Congolese refugees. However, a tripartite agreement was signed between Burundi, the DRC and UNHCR that will allow the repatriation of Congolese refugees as soon as the security situation in the DRC allows it.



Financial information

UNHCR's budget was fully funded. However, some planned activities for which earmarked funds had been allocated could not be implemented due to slow local administrative constraints, notably the construction of integrated rural villages. Out of the five villages planned, only three were constructed due to the delay of the allocation of suitable sites, leaving a significant amount of the budget unspent at the end of the year.

Organization and implementation

The operation in Burundi was managed by the country office in Bujumbura, one sub-office in Muyinga, two field offices in Ruyigi and Makamba, and two satellite offices in Bururi and Rutana. These were staffed by 147 personnel, including 21 international staff, 108 national staff, 15 UNVs and three consultants.

Working with others

UNHCR and other UN agencies in Burundi worked under a unified framework for the security, safety and well-being of all UN and partner staff. Compliance of the agencies with minimum security standards was regularly monitored. UNHCR assumed leadership of the protection cluster.

UNHCR participated in the development of UNDAF (2010 – 2014) which recognizes the reintegration of returnees as an essential component for the development of the country.

Overall assessment

The number of Burundian refugees who repatriated was lower than expected. Nonetheless, UNHCR supported the establishment and functioning of ONPRA, which increased the processing of asylum cases and the prevention of *refoulement* of asylum-seekers.

UNHCR's active involvement in the UNDAF process and the recognition of the need for an enhanced reintegration of returnees as an integral part of development, will lead to better collaboration with all stakeholders and improve assistance to returnees.

Overall, the shelter programme for returnees was delayed by the inability of concerned government institutions to allocate suitable sites for the construction of shelter in the integrated rural villages for returnees.

Partners
Implementing partners
Government: <i>Ministère de l'Intérieur (Office National pour la Protection des Réfugiés et des Apatrides, Centre National d'Identification), Ministère de la solidarité nationale, du rapatriement des réfugiés et de la réintégration sociale (Projet d'appui au rapatriement et à la réintégration des sinistrés-PARESI), Commission nationale des terres et autres biens</i>
NGOs: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, African Humanitarian Action, <i>Association des femmes juristes, Conseil pour l'Education et le Développement, Fédération Nationale des Coopératives d'Épargne et de Crédit du Burundi, Handicap International</i> (France), International Rescue Committee, Ligue Iteka, Norwegian Refugee Council, Stop SIDA, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization – Health Net International, World Outreach Initiatives
Others: <i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)</i>
Operational partners
NGOs: Norwegian Refugee Council, Refugee Education Trust, Solidarités
Others: BINUB, FAO, ICRC, UNICEF, WFP, WHO

Budget, income and expenditure in Burundi (USD)

	Final budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available	Total funds available	Total expenditure
Annual budget	33,959,188	29,649,814	4,113,716	33,763,530	29,780,677
1972 Burundian refugees in Tanzania SB	5,546,815	2,406,220	2,486,334	4,892,554	4,892,554
Avian and human influenza preparedness SB	28,899	0	28,899	28,899	28,899
Supplementary budget subtotal	5,575,714	2,406,220	2,515,232	4,921,453	4,921,453
Total	39,534,902	32,056,034	6,628,948	38,684,982	34,702,129

Note: Supplementary programmes do not include seven per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR. Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

Financial report for UNHCR's operations in Burundi (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current years' project			Previous years' project
	Annual budget	Supplementary budgets	Total	Annual and supplementary budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	5,015,075	592,133	5,607,208	0
Community services	219,061	0	219,061	15,824
Domestic needs and household support	437,457	1,802,721	2,240,178	37,459
Education	172,641	0	172,641	130,821
Forestry	37,250	0	37,250	41,350
Health and nutrition	727,526	16,524	744,050	431,680
Income generation	138,003	0	138,003	26,793
Legal assistance	1,008,400	134,376	1,142,776	229,320
Operational support (to agencies)	1,676,973	58,553	1,735,526	216,571
Sanitation	27,521	0	27,521	2,322
Shelter and infrastructure	6,775,460	564,298	7,339,757	545,934
Transport and logistics	2,558,945	1,149,945	3,708,891	641,148
Water	167,497	0	167,497	47,176
Instalments to implementing partners	6,599,265	602,901	7,202,166	(2,366,399)
Subtotal operational activities	25,561,073	4,921,453	30,482,525	(0)
Programme support	4,219,604	0	4,219,604	0
Total expenditure	29,780,677	4,921,453	34,702,129	(0)

Cancellation on previous years' expenditure

(135,775)

Instalments with implementing partners

Payments made	13,321,952	2,189,703	15,511,655	
Reporting received	(6,722,687)	(1,586,802)	(8,309,489)	
Balance	6,599,265	602,901	7,202,166	

Previous year's report

Instalments with implementing partners:				
Outstanding 1st January				3,584,950
Reporting received				(2,366,399)
Refunded to UNHCR				(611,324)
Currency adjustment				(1,142)
Outstanding 31st December				606,085